

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-49. (Canceled)

50. (Currently Amended) A method in a computer system for analyzing data produced for legal purposes, the method comprising:

receiving, from an ~~external~~ information system that is external to the computer system for analyzing data produced for legal purposes, a plurality of electronic files that are stored in a data structure arranged according to a directory structure, that are subject to a legal proceeding, ~~the electronic files~~ and that are produced by at least one party involved in the legal proceeding;

storing the received electronic files in a searchable format;

storing and indexing metadata associated with the received electronic files while preserving directory structure information of the received data structure;

receiving a request for electronic files having a specified characteristic; and

processing the indexed metadata to determine a set of electronic files having the specified characteristic, thereby facilitating processing of the determined set of electronic files for legal purposes.

51. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 50, further comprising returning an indication of the determined set of electronic files.

52. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 51 wherein returning the indication of the set of electronic files includes returning a list of electronic files that contain content ~~matching~~ that matches the specified characteristic.

53. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 50 wherein storing and indexing the metadata includes storing and indexing the metadata in a database.

54. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 50 wherein storing the received electronic files in the searchable format includes storing the received electronic files in a searchable text format.

55. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 50 wherein the legal proceeding is ~~at least one of a~~ discovery proceeding that is part of a lawsuit, a mergers and acquisitions proceeding, ~~and or~~ a due diligence effort.

56. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 50 wherein receiving the plurality of electronic files that are subject to the legal proceeding, the electronic files produced by at least one party involved in the legal proceeding, comprises:

receiving, from the ~~external~~ information system that is external to the computer system for analyzing data for legal purposes, at least some electronic files that have been previously ~~sent from~~ exchanged between the at least one party ~~to~~ and another party prior to commencement of the legal proceeding, the external information system belonging to the at least one party of the legal proceeding and having stored therein these electronic files; ~~and~~

~~receiving,~~ wherein the plurality of electronic files are received at the computer system during the legal proceeding, these stored electronic files from the external information system that belongs to the at least one party, the computer system not belonging to any party of the legal proceeding.

57. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 50 wherein the received electronic files include stored emails, and wherein storing and indexing metadata associated with the received electronic files includes storing and indexing threading information associated with the emails.

58. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 50 wherein receiving the plurality of electronic files that are subject to the legal proceeding from the external information system includes receiving ~~at least one of an~~ electronic calendar, electronic schedule, spreadsheet, word-processing file, electronic files arranged in a the directory structure, ~~and or~~ graphical data ~~from the external information system.~~

59. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 50 wherein storing and indexing metadata associated with the received electronic files includes storing and indexing metadata associated with a native format of each of the received electronic files.

60. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 50, further comprising:
recursively extracting the plurality of electronic files from a plurality of paths of a
data structure ~~provided that is received~~ from the external information system;
obtaining and indexing the metadata from each of the recursively extracted electronic files;
converting the recursively extracted electronic files to a read-only format; and
indexing textual content of the recursively extracted electronic files to provide the searchable format.

61. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein at least some of the recursively extracted electronic files include emails having attachments, the method further comprising:
storing the emails in a read-only format and in the searchable format;
separately storing the attachments in a read-only format and in a searchable format; and
storing and indexing metadata associated with the attachments.

62. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 60 wherein recursively extracting the plurality of electronic files from the plurality of paths of the data structure

~~provided~~received from the external information system includes recursively extracting the plurality of electronic files from a storage medium delivered from the external information system in response to a production request issued during the legal proceeding.

63. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein recursively extracting the plurality of electronic files includes recursively extracting the plurality of electronic files using application programs that can read and translate the electronic files.

64. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 50, further comprising providing a user interface to display an electronic file having the specified characteristic and that is responsive to the request, and wherein the user interface is usable through which to apply legal annotations to; the electronic files having the specified characteristic and that are responsive to the request.

65. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 64 wherein the legal annotations include at least one of a-reviewed, privileged, hot, responsive, ~~and-or~~ witness preparation annotations~~selections provided via the user interface~~.

66. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 50, further comprising providing summary information indicative of electronic files that are available to be processed to determine the set of electronic files having the specified characteristic.

67. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 50, further comprising processing the electronic files in the searchable format to determine the set of electronic files having the specified characteristic.

68. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 50 wherein receiving the request for electronic files having a specified characteristic includes receiving a request that specifies at least one of the following: a word in an electronic file, a sender of an email, a

recipient of an email, a subject of an email, a date associated with an electronic file, properties information associated with the electronic file, an annotation to an electronic file, attachment information, a case ~~identification~~identifier, and ~~or~~ a collection name.

69. (Currently Amended) A method in a computer system for facilitating the analyzing-analysis of data produced for legal purposes, the method comprising:

receiving, from an ~~external~~ information system that is external to the computer system for analyzing data produced for legal purposes, a plurality of electronic files that are subject to a legal proceeding, that are the electronic files produced for purposes of the legal proceeding by at least one party involved in the legal proceeding, and that are stored prior to being received by the computer system in a data structure in-associated with the external information system prior to being received at the computer system;

recursively extracting from the data structure the plurality of electronic files; received from the external information system, ~~from the data structure~~;

obtaining and indexing metadata from each of the recursively extracted electronic files;

converting each of the recursively extracted electronic files to a ~~readable~~ displayable format; and

converting each of the recursively extracted electronic files to a searchable format and indexing content of each converted electronic file; and

responding to a request for at least one file having specified characteristics using at least one of the metadata or the indexed content.

~~indexing content of the recursively extracted electronic files to provide a searchable format.~~

70. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 69 wherein receiving the plurality of electronic files that are subject to the legal proceeding further comprises:

receiving, from the external information system, at least some electronic files that have been ~~sent from previously exchanged between~~ the at least one party ~~to and~~ another party prior to ~~commencement of the legal proceeding and stored in the data structure~~, the external information system and the data structure belonging to the at least one party of the legal proceeding, ~~and having stored in the data structure these electronic files;~~ and

~~receiving, at the computer system during the legal proceeding, the data structure from the external information system belonging to the at least one party and having these electronic files stored therein, the computer system not belonging to any the at least one party of the legal proceeding.~~

71. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 69 wherein the received electronic files include emails, at least some of which have attachments, the method further comprising:

storing the emails in a ~~the readable displayable~~ format and in the searchable format;

separately storing the attachments in a ~~readable displayable~~ format and in a searchable format; and

storing and indexing metadata associated with the attachments.

72. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 71 wherein obtaining and indexing metadata from each of the recursively extracted electronic files includes obtaining and indexing threading information associated with the emails.

73. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 69 wherein recursively extracting the electronic files from the data structure comprises:

determining which versions of applications can respectively read each of the electronic files in the data structure; and

using the determined versions of the applications to read their respective electronic files.

74. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 69, further comprising:
receiving a query for electronic files having a specified characteristic;
returning a response to the query, the response being indicative of electronic files that have the specified characteristic; and
presenting a copy of at least one of these electronic files in a user interface along with legal annotation selections to apply to ~~that~~ the copy of ~~that~~ the electronic file.

75. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture for a computer system, the article of manufacture comprising:

a machine-readable medium having instructions stored thereon to cause a computer processor to analyze data produced for legal purposes, by:

loading, from an ~~external~~ information system external to the computer system having the machine-readable medium, a plurality of electronic files that are subject to a legal proceeding, ~~the electronic files~~ that are produced by at least one party involved in the legal proceeding, and that are stored in a data structure ~~in associated with~~ the external information system prior to being loaded at the computer system;

recursively extracting the plurality of electronic files, ~~loaded from the external information system~~, from the loaded data structure;

obtaining and indexing metadata from each of the recursively extracted electronic files;

converting the recursively extracted electronic files to a ~~readable~~ displayable format; and

converting and indexing content of the recursively extracted electronic files to provide a searchable format.

76. (Currently Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 75 wherein the instructions to load the electronic files include instructions to:

load, from the external information system, at least some electronic files that have been ~~sent from~~exchanged between the at least one party ~~to~~and another party prior to ~~commencement of the legal proceeding and stored in the data structure~~, the external information system and the data structure belonging to the at least one party of the legal proceeding ~~and having stored in the data structure these electronic files;~~ and

~~load, at the computer system during the legal proceeding, the data structure from the external information system belonging to the at least one party and having these electronic files stored therein, the computer system not belonging to any~~ the at least one party of the legal proceeding.

77. (Currently Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 75 wherein the loaded electronic files include emails, at least some of which have attachments, the machine-readable medium further including instructions stored thereon to:

store the emails in a ~~readable~~displayable format and in the searchable format;

separately store the attachments in a ~~readable~~displayable format and in a searchable format; and

storing and indexing metadata associated with the attachments and threading information associated with the emails.

78. (Currently Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 75 wherein the loaded electronic files includes ~~at least one of an electronic calendar, an electronic schedule, a spreadsheet, a word-processing file, electronic files arranged in a~~ the directory structure, ~~and or~~ graphical data.

79. (Currently Amended) A computer system for analyzing data produced for legal purposes, the computer system comprising:

a means for receiving, from an ~~external~~ information system that is external to the computer system for analyzing data produced for legal purposes, a plurality of electronic files that are subject to a legal proceeding, the electronic files produced as part of the legal proceeding by at least one party involved in the legal proceeding;

a means for storing the received electronic files in a searchable format;

a means for storing and indexing metadata associated with the received electronic files;

a means for receiving a request for electronic files having a specified characteristic; and

a means for processing the indexed metadata to determine a set of electronic files having the specified characteristic.

80. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 79, further comprising a means for returning an indication of the determined set of electronic files and for presenting summary information.

81. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 79 wherein the means for receiving the plurality of electronic files that are subject to the legal proceeding, the electronic files produced as part of the legal proceeding by at least one party involved in the legal proceeding, comprises:

a means for loading onto the computer system during the legal proceeding, from the external information system, at least some electronic files that have been previously ~~sent from~~ exchanged between the at least one party ~~to and~~ another party prior to ~~commencement of the~~ legal proceeding and stored on the external information system, wherein the external information system belonging belongs to the at least one party of the legal proceeding and having stored therein these electronic files; and wherein

~~a means for loading, at the computer system during the legal proceeding, these stored electronic files from the external information system that belongs to the at least one party;~~
the computer system does not belonging to any the at least one party of the legal proceeding.

82. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 79, further comprising:

a means for recursively extracting the plurality of electronic files from a data structure provided from the external information system;

a means for obtaining and indexing the metadata from each of the recursively extracted electronic files;

a means for converting the recursively extracted electronic files to a read-only format; and

a means for generating and indexing textual content of the recursively extracted electronic files to provide the searchable format.

83. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim ~~79-82~~ wherein at least some of the recursively extracted electronic files include emails having attachments, the computer system further comprising:

a means for storing the emails in a read-only format and in the searchable format;

a means for separately storing the attachments in a read-only format and in a searchable format; and

a means for storing and indexing metadata associated with the attachments.

84. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 79, further comprising a user interface means for generating the request and for presenting an indication of the set of electronic files having the specified characteristic, the user interface means including a means for adding annotations to a copy of an electronic file presented thereon, the annotations indicating information useful for the legal proceeding.

85. (Currently Amended) A computer system to analyze data produced for legal purposes, the computer system comprising:

at least one recursive engine to receive, from an ~~external~~ information system that is external to the computer system to analyze data produced for legal purposes, a plurality of electronic files that are subject to a legal proceeding, the electronic files produced by and belonging to at least one party involved in the legal proceeding and stored in a storage medium, and to extract the plurality of electronic files from the storage medium;

a first server unit coupled to the recursive engine to store the received electronic files in a searchable format;

a second server unit coupled to the recursive engine to store and index metadata associated with the received electronic files; and

an engine in communication with the first and second server units to receive a request for electronic files having a specified characteristic and to process the indexed metadata to determine a set of electronic files having the specified characteristic.

86. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 85, further comprising at least one application that can read a format of the received electronic files.

87. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 85 wherein the received electronic files include emails, at least some of which have attachments, the computer system further including:

at least one controller coupled to the recursive engine to determine ~~which a~~ server unit to which to send the extracted electronic files; and

a third server unit coupled to the controller to store the emails in ~~the a~~ readable displayable format and to separately store the attachments in the ~~readable~~ displayable format, wherein the first server unit stores the attachment a searchable format and wherein the second server unit stores and index metadata associated with the attachments and threading information associated with the emails.

88. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 85, further comprising a first administration program to generate a directory structure in the first server unit that indexes text data stored therein.

89. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 88, further comprising a second administration program to generate catalog and directory parameters that reference the directory structure in the first server unit and the text data stored therein.

90. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 85, further comprising at least one administration program to generate catalog and database parameters that reference the second server unit and the metadata stored therein.

91. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 85, further comprising another server unit, coupled between a client terminal and the engine, to receive the request from the client terminal and to pass the request to the engine to allow the engine to apply the specified characteristic in the request to at least one of the first and second server units to the database, the engine being configured to return responsive results of the request ~~the~~ to another server unit.

92. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 91 wherein the another server unit includes a virtual directory to reference data stored in the first and second server units.

93. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 85, further comprising:

a server having the engine and the first and second server units;

a user authentication unit communicatively coupled to the server to control access to the server;

a user information unit communicatively coupled to the server to store information associated with users authenticated by and provided with access by the user authentication unit; and

an administration unit to support services between the server and the user authentication and user information units.

94. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 93 wherein the server supports legal annotation tools on a user interface that is arranged to present a copy of an electronic ~~document~~file that has the specified characteristic.

95. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 85 wherein the first and second server units comprise part of a database system.

96. (New) The method of claim 69 wherein the data structure stores the files according to a directory structure and wherein the obtaining and indexing metadata from each of the recursively extracted electronic files further comprises:

obtaining and indexing metadata that preserves information regarding the directory structure in which the files are stored.

97. (New) The method of claim 69 wherein the responding to the request for at least one file having specified characteristics using at least one of the metadata or the indexed content comprises:

responding to a request for at least one file having characteristics that are based upon an arrangement of the at least one file in the directory structure using the indexed metadata.